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OLC 72-1137

15 November 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing of Senator Henry Bellmon (R., Okla.) on the
Soviet Agriculture Situation

1. Today I accompanied [redacted] of OER, to a briefing of Senator Henry Bellmon on the Soviet agricultural situation, especially the wheat shortage. At the outset Senator Bellmon was concerned with what appeared to him to be the delay in reporting on the Soviet wheat shortage but when [redacted] explained the problems, both in the collection of this information and the critical timing involved, the Senator seemed to understand. He feels, however, that steps should be taken, through legislation if necessary, to insure that this country will be in possession of accurate information in areas of this sort before agreements are made for the sale of agricultural commodities in the future. He also believes that in our negotiations with the Soviets and others we should obtain agreements from them providing for the exchange of this kind of information.

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2. The Senator brought up the question of the use of overhead reconnaissance to obtain timely information on Soviet agricultural yields. He said that representatives of NASA had visited him just prior to our meeting and had told him that through the ERTS satellite it was possible to identify various types of grains and other agriculture products and the NASA representatives left with him a [redacted] photograph [redacted] [redacted] which they felt demonstrated this capability. We explained we were not photographic intelligence experts but it had been our impression that while the use of satellite photography was being seriously studied, [redacted]

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[redacted] We promised to look into this further, however.

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3. The Senator said he understood the Agency had provided the Department of Agriculture with a report prior to July of this year on the Soviet wheat problem. If there was such a report he would like to have it forwarded to him in Bonn. We said we were quite sure there was no such report within that time-frame and I said the impression that there was had been created from erroneous press stories on the subject.

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4. [] left some unclassified data with the Senator for his use and he made several notes during the course of the briefing. He seemed quite satisfied and thanked us for coming to see him on short notice.



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Deputy Legislative Counsel

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